

# Proactive Retail Strategy

City of Alexandria  
Department of Planning and Zoning

## *A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood*

### **Proactive Retail Strategy**



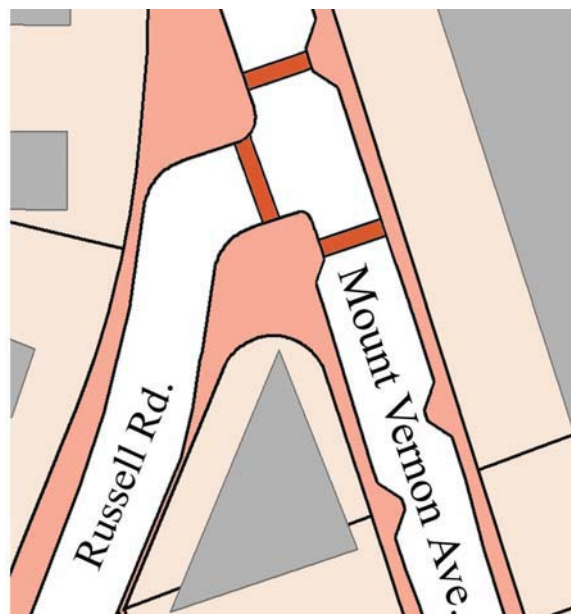
### **Implementation**

#### **Program:**

- Public Investment
- Proactive Retail Strategy
- Zoning Tools
- Marketing and Promotions

#### **Public Investment:**

- Datatel parking lot
- Capital Improvements Program (CIP)
  - Mid-term streetscape and pedestrian improvements
  - Long-term intersection redesign and construction



## **Proactive Retail Strategy**

### **The Strategy**

#### ***Public Improvements***

- Streetscape and gateway improvements
- Intersection and pedestrian improvements

#### ***Guidelines***

- Create guidelines/loans to assist business owners with the improvement of their storefront facades

#### ***Incentives – Zoning Tools***

- Provide flexibility in zoning rules regarding uses that require special use permit approval and off-street parking; allow increase in floor area ratio with special use permit
- Use parking to leverage new private investment

#### ***Marketing and Promotions***

- Retain the unique Arlandria name in marketing efforts
- Incorporate niche destination marketing themes
- Enhance a business organization to work towards developing and implementing
- Strengthen individual businesses with business plans and merchandizing strategies—match potential retail users with available space



*Illustrative*



## *A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood*

### **Proactive Retail Strategy**

#### ***Building and Retail Guidelines***

Good building and storefront design greatly enhances the success of each individual business as well as the entire commercial district. Potential benefits to property and business owners who adopt these guidelines:

- Increased store sales and profits
- Stabilized and enhanced property values
- Increased tourism resulting in increased sales
- Reinforced sense of community and a pleasing environment
- Preserved community's identity and uniqueness
- Increased sense of quality of the individual stores and business district

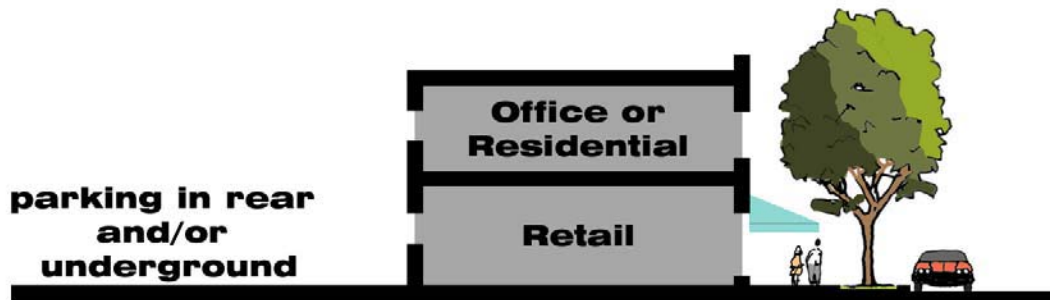


## **Proactive Retail Strategy**

### ***Building and Retail Guidelines***

Along Mt. Vernon Avenue, infill and new development of properties is encouraged with buildings that incorporate a mix of uses, with ground floor retail and office or residential above, and at a mass and scale that is appropriate and compatible with the existing character of Mt. Vernon Avenue.

#### ***Building envelope***



**Building Scale (.5 FAR)**



**Building Scale w/SUP (1.5 FAR)**

## *A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood*

### **Proactive Retail Strategy**

#### ***Building and Retail Guidelines***

##### ***Building facades***

Newly constructed buildings and additions should contribute to the creation of a streetscape with varying architectural treatments, and should be designed to reflect the small lot character (i.e. 50 foot lot widths) of the neighborhood.

Building elevations should be modulated at a minimum of every 50' to break up the mass of the building facade into smaller increments. This modulation is created by a setback in the plane of the facade with a minimum of 5' from the front building wall, and a minimum 5' change in the height of the parapet. This is further emphasized by a change in facade material, color, and/or stylistic detail.



Decorative architectural elements such as cornices, belt courses, and eaves should be incorporated to give scale and interest to the facades, define building elements, and create three dimensional richness.





## *A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood*

### **Proactive Retail Strategy**

#### ***Building and Retail Guidelines***

##### ***Facade Rhythms***

The building facades should incorporate multiple rhythms or cadences (rather than a single repetitive rhythm) similar to that found in the historic or traditional buildings in the neighborhood.

Encourage changes and/or breaks in the facade at least every twenty five feet (25') in length with a change in color or materials, changes in wall planes, placement of awnings, or other similar methods.



## **Proactive Retail Strategy**

### ***Building and Retail Guidelines***

Building walls should be punctured by well-proportioned window openings that provide three dimensional relief, detail, interest and rhythmic variation in the wall.

A more specific list of the elements that make up a rhythmic variation in buildings includes the following:

- Recessed windows
- Projecting windows
- Bay windows
- Structural elements
- Textures, patterns and colors
- Trim elements
- Balconies
- Belt-courses
- Cornices
- Awnings and shutters
- Landscape elements

The intent is to incorporate sufficient offsets and other devices that will create a façade that is in scale with the traditional pattern of small buildings found along Mt. Vernon Avenue.

New and remodeled facades should conform to the general Art Deco architectural style of the historic buildings in Arlandria and the greater neighborhood. Flat roofs are encouraged.



*Art Deco elements*



*Art Deco elements*





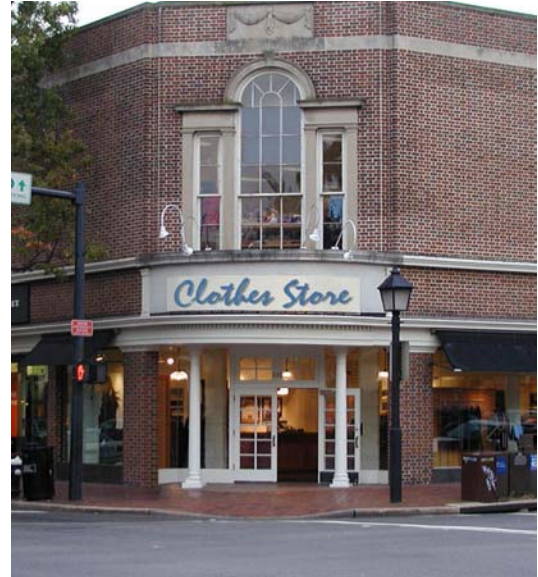
## *A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood*

### **Proactive Retail Strategy**

#### ***Building and Retail Guidelines***

##### ***Corner Treatment***

In cases where buildings are on a corner, special treatment is encouraged for the buildings at these locations. This includes such things as rounded or cut corners, articulated corner entrances, accented display windows, special corner roof features, etc.



##### ***'T' Intersection Treatment***

In cases where buildings terminate the view down a street at a 'T' intersection, special treatment is encouraged including what is mentioned above, plus special facade treatment that lines up with the street view it is terminating. These would include special accented architectural features, distinctive façade fenestration, accented roof profile, special building materials, etc.



## **Proactive Retail Strategy**

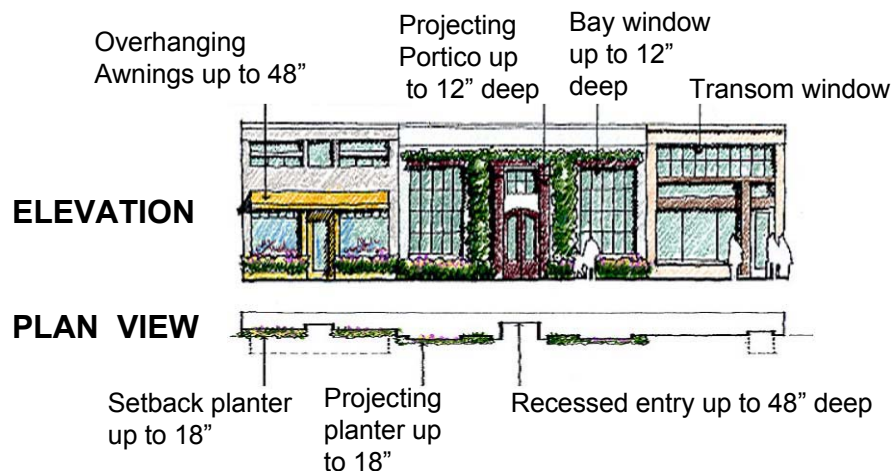
### ***Building and Retail Guidelines***

#### ***Storefront Design***

Storefronts are the first point of contact with potential customers and together with neighboring storefronts define the character of a neighborhood and retail street. The addition of outdoor cafes extends the store out onto the sidewalk and adds additional life to the street.



The storefront should work with the architecture of the overall building facade, should clearly and simply market the name of the business and the type of services and products offered. The following elements illustrate simple, desirable variations in storefront articulation.



## **Proactive Retail Strategy**

### ***Building and Retail Guidelines***

#### ***Storefront Design***

*Storefront design should include as many of the following items as possible:*

- Individual storefront facades should be narrow and change often to add a richness to the sidewalk, street, and neighborhood. The preferred width of the storefront is approximately 20-25 feet, and should be a maximum of 50 feet.



- Primary pedestrian entrances should directly front the sidewalk
- Entrances should be recessed up to 48 inches from the facade
- Detailed window frames with decorative moldings are encouraged
- A pattern of transom windows, horizontal elements and mullions that provide unique rhythm of glass and trim elements in the storefront is encouraged.
- 65-75% of the ground floor façade should be windows with clear glass
- Creative display of merchandise and/or services should be included in storefront windows



## *A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood*

### **Proactive Retail Strategy**

### ***Building and Retail Guidelines***

#### **Undesirable**



*Cluttered Signage and Appearance*

Too many business and window signs creates a cluttered appearance, confusing customers and blocking visibility into the store.

#### **Desirable**



*Clear, Legible Signage*

A few legible signs identify the businesses and create a distinctive storefront and streetscape.

#### **Undesirable**



*Single-Story Building*

The construction of single story buildings is strongly discouraged.

#### **Desirable**



*Multi-Story Buildings*

New construction should be at a scale that is compatible with the existing urban commercial corridor, with buildings of two to three stories along the street.

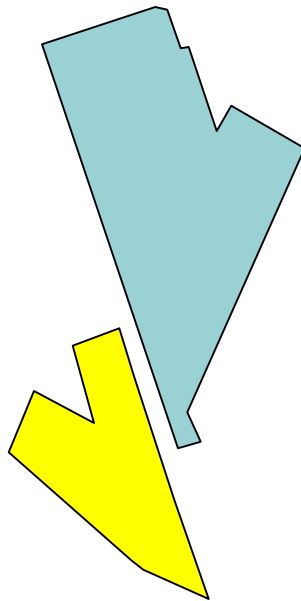
## *A Vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood* **Proactive Retail Strategy**

### ***Incentives – Zoning Tools***

- **Potomac West Small Area Plan**
  - Incorporate the recommendations of this plan document and the UPW Task Force for Safeway-Datatel into the City's Master Plan
- **Coordinated Development District (CDD)**
  - Amend Arlandria CDD to reflect the planning principles and design concepts from this plan document
  - Create Safeway-Datatel CDD to incorporate the planning principles and design concepts of the UPW Task Force Plan
- **Arlandria Neighborhood Retail Zone**
  - Revitalize the area with mix of uses that are desirable from a market perspective, including pedestrian-scale retail, by providing:
    - Flexibility in parking for change of use
    - Administrative review for desired uses (limited restaurant operations, live theater, outdoor market)
  - Promote infill and redevelopment consistent with long range vision for an active pedestrian retail street
    - FAR incentives
    - Scale, height, bulk, setbacks to create an “urban village”
  - Provide flexibility to implement the proposed marketing strategy
    - Public art and murals
    - Signage and community identifying banners
    - Store frontage guidelines

## **Proactive Retail Strategy**

### ***Arlandria Neighborhood Retail Zone and Coordinated Development Districts***



CDD Overlays



## **Proactive Retail Strategy**

### ***Flexible parking requirements***

The provision of convenient, short-term parking for customers is a major issue affecting the potential viability of retail businesses. The construction of the public parking lot on the former Datatel site provides the opportunity to give flexibility to the small business and property owners by providing parking in convenient proximity to the main pedestrian retail area along Mt. Vernon Avenue. In order to allow the small businesses to expand and for limited infill development to occur along the corridor, provision for flexibility in the parking requirements for retail uses is incorporated into the retail strategy. The following flexible parking provisions are recommended, with the actual parking demand being met by the public parking facility:

- Restaurants may provide up to 16 outdoor seats with no additional off-street parking requirement;
- If a business does not have parking now, it will not be required to provide it;
- For new buildings or additions to existing buildings of up to 5,000 sf or less of retail and office/residential space located within 500 feet of a public parking facility, only 40 percent of the total parking requirement is required to be provided on-site and;
- When there is a change in use to a use that has a greater parking requirement than the previous use and is located within 500 feet of a public parking lot or facility and the development complies with the design and retail guidelines, no additional off-street parking is required.

The parking lot on the former Datatel site is not intended to serve the long-term needs of the neighborhood. The long-term proposal is for the construction of a public parking garage on the site to serve the retail needs of businesses and new development along Mt. Vernon Avenue. As the parking lot can only accommodate a limited number of cars, it is suggested that the use of this lot to meet parking requirements will need to be monitored over time. Once 20,000 square feet of new construction takes place using the lot to reduce parking requirements, the parking reduction provisions should cease to be in effect until such time as the public parking structure is constructed.

## **Proactive Retail Strategy**

### ***Marketing and Promotions***



- Retain the unique Arlandria name in marketing efforts
- Build upon the area as an entertainment venue
- Incorporate niche destination marketing themes:
  - Family
  - Health and recreation
  - Multi-cultural diversity
- Enhance a business organization to work towards developing and implementing:
  - Marketing and promotion plans
  - Program events
  - Consistent business hours
  - Other business enhancement activities
- Strengthen individual businesses with business plans and merchandizing strategies—match potential retail users with available space
- Assist businesses to develop and to prosper using via existing agencies (Alexandria Economic Development Partnership and the Alexandria Small Business Development Center). The Alexandria Small Business Development Center offers the following services:
  - Cash flow assessment and management
  - Managing accounts receivable and inventory
  - Expansion feasibility/advice
  - Financial analysis and access to capital sources
  - Business best practices
  - Tax/regulatory compliance guidelines